

Park and Recreation exists to provide a cost-effective system of safe and attractive parks and recreation land, facilities and programs that enhance the beautification of the City; provide for the leisure time pursuits of all Wichita residents and visitors; and promote appreciation of the City's environmental resources.

Overview

The Park and Recreation Department provides recreational opportunities, maintains landscaping at City parks, facilities, and along right-of-ways and operates a number of cultural and performing arts facilities.



Park and Recreation staff maintain over 38 miles of bike paths and jogging trails, including this path in Sim Park.

The Department supports over 4,500 acres of parks and greenways, 3.8 million square feet of medians, ten recreation centers, 12 swimming pools, an art center, and numerous youth-based activities and athletics programs.

Administration is responsible for the leadership, management and direction of the department. The division provides, among other duties, financial planning and reporting, budgeting, payroll support and capital project initiation and development. Forestry & Central Support is charged with carrying out a comprehensive tree planting, maintenance and removal program. The Division also maintains plumbing, electrical and other maintenance aspects of park facilities. The Parks and Recreation Division

provides basic maintenance and support to the City's 90 parks and athletic fields. All recreational programming, from adult sports to the youth-targeted Summer of Discovery program, is coordinated and administered within this division.

Botanica, Century II, Expo Hall, CityArts, the Historical Museum, and the Wichita Boathouse are all divisions of the Park Department. Century II and Expo Hall provide an attractive venue for entertainment and conventions. Botanica is a beautiful botanical garden located in Sim Park, near the Arkansas River. The Boathouse is a popular meeting and reception facility. Educational opportunities in the respective fields of Wichita/Sedgwick County history are provided through the Historical Museum.

The Park and Recreation Department is funded entirely from the General Fund. However, the costs of five divisions: Park and Recreation, CityArts, Century II, Expo Hall, and the Wichita Boathouse - partially offset by revenue derived from rentals, reimbursements and fees. In 2003, these revenues are budgeted to total \$5 million, or nearly one third of Park expenditures.

Finance and Operations

The budget for Park provides over \$17 million from the General Fund and reflects a new organizational structure implemented in 2000. The new structure streamlines maintenance activities into recreation related maintenance or greenway and open space maintenance, a move that is projected to enhance responsiveness and efficiency. In addition, further organizational enhancements are budgeted in 2003, including the addition of an Assistant Director of Park and Recreation, as well as contingency funding to implement maintenance organizational improvements in the future. Six positions are eliminated in the Park budget.

The **Forestry and Central Support** Division is responsible for a variety of functions, including tree planting, tree trimming, reforestation, and other electrical, plumbing, mechanical and construction services.

The core function of Forestry and Central Support remains the pruning and removal of trees located in public areas. Annually, around 10,000 trees are pruned using a systematic neighborhood pruning method. The Division is also responsible for removing dead or diseased trees. During severe storms, staff are tasked with assisting in debris removal, particularly tree debris. In 2000, due to several severe storms, over 1,600 tons of wood waste debris was removed from City right-of-ways.

The City engages in an aggressive reforestation effort, spearheaded by this Division. Annually, 2,300 trees are planted along thoroughfares, in parks, in public areas, and in easements. Each year since 1986, these efforts have helped Wichita earn the designation of "Tree City, USA."



Utilizing the best technology available, Forestry crews prune or remove nearly 12,900 trees annually.

The City has invested heavily in landscaping freeway corridors, including West Kellogg, K-96 in northeast Wichita, and Kellogg and Oliver in east Wichita. The areas include plantings and trees that are maintained by this division.

Selected Performance Measures				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Trees planted	2,375	2,500	2,500	2,500
Trees pruned	10,431	17,000	17,000	17,000
Trees removed	2,375	2,000	2,000	2,000

Parks and Recreation, the Department's largest division, operates ten neighborhood recreation centers, twelve swimming pools, two developing sports complexes, and offers a variety of athletic programs and leagues for youth and adults. The Division offers leisure opportuni-

ties for residents by maintaining almost 100 parks totaling over 4,500 acres. This Division performs right-of-way mowing and maintenance activities and has the responsibility of maintaining the downtown area, including Old Town, the Douglas Streetscape, the East Bank area, and the Museum District. Staff maintain a variety of statues, monuments, and memorials located on Park grounds. Due to Wichita's recent growth, two additional maintenance crews were added in 2002.

The Park and Recreation Division budget is nearly \$9 million in 2003, with costs partially offset by user fees and rentals. In 2003, revenues are projected to total \$1.9 million. Cost recovery of recreational activities varies with the type of activity. Swimming pools have recovered around 60 percent of their direct costs, while recreation centers have recovered only 30 percent of direct costs.

In addition to over 4,500 acres of parkland, there are 72 playground areas in neighborhood parks. The Park and Recreation Division inspects and maintains the playground equipment to ensure public safety. To facili-

Selected Performance Measures				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Cost recovery ñ recreation centers	35.0%	31.0%	32.0%	32.0%
Cost recovery ñ swimming pools	47.4%	58.0%	61.0%	61.0%

tate the removal of old, unsafe equipment and its replacement with new, safer equipment that meets current national safety standards, a \$1 million playground improvement plan is currently underway. Staff is also charged with maintaining signs, fencing, picnic tables, drinking and decorative fountains and a variety of other items in and around the City's parks and recreational facilities. Finally, Division staff maintains the City's network of over 38 miles of bike paths and jogging trails.

Recreation staff provides athletic programs year round in a variety of sports. Outdoor sports, including baseball, softball, soccer and football, are offered at many different well maintained facilities, including the new South Lakes and Northeast Sports Complexes, West Side Athletic Field, Planeview Park and others. Staff is responsible for organizing more than 90 leagues, with over 200 teams annually, collecting fees, scheduling games, and maintaining the fields. In the near future, leagues will be scheduled at the developing Northeast Sports Complex, enhancing league activities for Wichitans.

The Park and Recreation Division manages and operates Summer of Discovery, a ten-week summer program for children ages 6 to 12. The licensed program is available to all children, regardless of income, with enrollment fees charged on an ability-to-pay basis. Annually, more than 1,000 children enjoyed educational and entertaining activities such as boating and water safety, science and nature, sports camps, magic shows, movies, swimming and more.

Additional programming is provided through ten community recreation centers. The facilities host a variety of classes for all ages, including gymnastics, aerobics, dance, cooking, judo and others. In addition, the recreational facilities offer rooms to rent for meetings or parties.

At the 119-acre Watson Park in south Wichita, paddle boating, fishing, pony rides, train tours, miniature golf and concessions are all available. Near the downtown area, the recently renovated Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Center offers 14 lighted tennis courts on a year-round basis. Lessons are available from an on-site tennis professional, and the Center's pro shop maintains a large supply of racquets, balls, and other

supplies. A BMX bike track is located in Emery Park in south Wichita, while a bridle path for equestrians is available at Pawnee Prairie Park in west Wichita. Herman Hill and Oak Park each contain a disk golf course.

During the summer, the Division operates 12 swimming pools located throughout the City. The pools offer reasonably priced recreational swimming and swimming lessons. Swim teams formed at each pool are also popular activities for youth, as the teams practice and ultimately compete annually in a citywide swim meet.



Youth enjoying a soccer game at South Lakes Park, one of the over 90 sports fields maintained by the Park Department.



McAdams Pool is one of twelve revenue-generating swimming pools operated by Park and Recreation every summer.

The Department contributes four staff to the Great Plains Nature Center, a modern, interactive educational facility staffed by local, State and Federal personnel. The facility, located at the 282-acre Chisholm Creek Park in north Wichita, serves as the base for the iWichita Wildi program, providing citizens with opportunities to experience wildlife and to learn about native plants and animals. Nature trails and wildlife viewing areas are both available at the park.

The City also participates in a partnership to support **Botanica**, the Wichita Gardens. Dedicated in 1987, Botanica is a partnership between the City of Wichita and Botanica, Inc. The City provides an annual operating subsidy of \$250,000 for salary support, basic insurance coverage and provides building maintenance support. One position is eliminated in this budget in 2003; however, the City subsidy to Botanica has not been reduced from traditional levels.

The privately incorporated Botanica, Inc, provides additional operating funding and coordinates volunteer support. Botanica is the premier botanical garden in the Great Plains region; visitors can view over 300 varieties of roses in the rose garden, as well as many different plants and flowers both native to Kansas and new to the area throughout the many gardens. Botanica is located in the heart of Wichita's Museum District and is adjacent to many parks and public areas, which are the responsibility of the Park Department to maintain.

Selected Performance Measures - Botanica				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Annual visitors	135,000	142,500	135,000	135,000
Private dollars raised	\$760,500	\$800,000	\$837,500	\$837,500

CityArts is the City's cultural arts center. Opened to the public in 1998, CityArts provides art classes for all ages at its downtown location on the East Bank. The primary emphasis is engaging beginners and children in the arts. CityArts offers classes in pottery, sculpture, silversmithing, woodworking, painting, weaving, and other arts. CityArts also has the responsibility for overseeing the care and maintenance of public art and sculptures, an activity for which \$50,000 has been included in the budget. One new position is included, primarily to coordinate Aviation Festival functions.

The **Century II/Expo Hall** complex in the East Bank area is Wichita's premier venue for entertainment, conventions, trade shows, and meetings. In 2001, the venue hosted twenty state conventions, eight regional/national conventions, and four trade shows. Century II/Expo Hall management saw 734,255 people

Selected Performance Measures - Century II/Expo Hall				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
State conventions hosted	20	35	35	35
Attendance at state conventions hosted	42,045	55,000	55,000	55,000
Event days hosted for state conventions	52	65	65	65

pass through the doors for various consumer shows, cultural events, entertainment events, and meetings.

The **Wichita Boathouse**, donated to the City in 1998, offers meeting, banquet, and reception facilities for rent. The Boathouse is home to the City's Visitor Information Center and the grounds feature a replica of an America's Cup-winning sailboat. The facility continues to be popular with both out-of-town visitors and Wichitans, hosting a wide array of meetings, banquets, and receptions. Highly utilized for wedding receptions, the venue has also hosted international gatherings of corporate executives. Upgrades to the catering kitchen have facilitated growth in banquet and reception business.



Park and Recreation operates several premier meeting and banquet facilities, including the Wichita Boathouse.

The **Wichita/Sedgwick County Historical Museum**, located in the old Wichita City Hall, provides documentation of life in Wichita as it has developed over the decades. In the past, the City has funded a portion of the salary and benefits for the museum's director, along with insurance and utilities. Private funding provides additional resources for housing the collection. The City allocation for the Museum remains at traditional levels; however, the Director position has been eliminated in 2003.

Highlights

- ✓ The Park budget includes nearly \$2.5 million to support the 721,000 square-foot Century II Convention Center, located in the heart of downtown on the bank of the Arkansas River and close to the first class hotels and the Old Town entertainment district.
- ✓ Nearly \$4 million is budgeted annually for recreation programs, serving youth and adults from ten neighborhood recreation centers.
- ✓ In an organizational re-structuring, the Assistant to the Director position is eliminated and a new Assistant Director position has been included.
- ✓ Three positions in the Recreation and Maintenance Division have been eliminated, in an effort to streamline operations.
- ✓ One position at Botanica and at the Historical Museum have been eliminated; however, the City subsidy for these facilities has not been reduced.

Park and Recreation Budget Summary					
	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2002 Revised	2003 Adopted	2004 Approved
Personal Services	10,376,537	11,579,850	11,365,150	11,752,190	12,056,900
Contractual Services	3,979,820	3,730,280	4,199,940	4,386,680	4,376,600
Commodities	732,461	682,520	742,950	764,770	762,370
Capital Outlay	111,628	63,760	61,810	71,570	81,600
Other	36,930	422,720	139,100	416,540	398,100
Total Park and Recreation Expenditures	15,237,376	16,479,130	16,508,950	17,391,750	17,675,570
Total full-time positions	212	222	219	213	213
Total part-time positions	801	669	808	802	802
Total FTE positions	323	394	330	324	324

Cemeteries

Cemeteries Trust Fund purpose is to provide resources for the management and maintenance of Highland Park and Jamesburg cemeteries

Overview

The Cemeteries Trust Fund is a self-sustaining fund supported by the sale of interment and monument permits. Grave openings are coordinated through the Finance Department, while cemetery management and maintenance is coordinated through the Park Department.

In 1982, the City voluntarily took over the ownership of Highland Park cemetery from Wichita Cemetery Company. Highland Park is the earliest Sedgwick County cemetery of record, located west and north of 13th Street and Hillside. The first burial was that of Albert Lewellen (age 5) in 1870, the same year the frontier town of Wichita was incorporated. Today, approximately 17,000 people are buried at Highland Park Cemetery. In addition to four Kansas governors, perhaps the most nationally recognized individual buried at Highland Park is Buffalo Bill Mathewson, the original Buffalo Bill.



The City is responsible for the maintenance of two cemeteries; Highland Park and Jamesburg.

From 1873 to 1880, what is currently Jamesburg Cemetery was a post office in the small village by the same name. Jamesburg cemetery was taken over by the City a couple of years after the Highland Park became a City property.

Finance and Operations

In addition to revenue from the sale of interment and monument permits, the Cemeteries Trust Fund accumulates a significant portion of its annual income from interest earnings on the fund's investment assets. The interest earnings typically allow revenues to outpace expenditures on a year-to-year basis, adding to the fund's balance and providing resources for capital improvements at each of the cemeteries, as needed.

Cemetery mowing and grounds maintenance are contracted with a private vendor through the Park Department. Cemeteries are mowed approximately fifteen times each year.

Cemeteries Trust Fund Budget Summary

	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2002 Revised	2003 Adopted	2004 Approved
Cemeteries Trust Revenue	64,090	52,170	35,710	35,710	35,710
Contractual Services	16,452	28,400	28,400	28,400	28,400
Commodities	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Cemeteries Trust Expenditures	16,452	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Cemeteries Trust Fund Balance	784,678	739,780	790,988	797,298	803,608